

Headline	SuriaKU a boon for B40 group		
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PILOT PROGRAMME

SuriaKU a boon for B40 group

ARAU: With the dawn of each new year, Zarina Mat Amin and her husband would have to scratch their head to find money for their children's school preparation.

But, thanks to the SuriaKU Sunlight at Koridor Utara pilot programme, which generates an additional monthly income of RM250 for seven years, the mother of three and 20 other families from the lower-income group (B40) in Pauh need no longer face such problems this year.

With money generated through the programme, Zarina, 43, was able to make early back-to-school preparations.

The project is a joint-effort between the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA), Perlis government, private company Gading Kencana Sdn Bhd, Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry, as well as the Sustainable Energy Development Authority (Seda).

Zarina, who depended on rubber tapping for a living, said she only earned RM400 a month depending on the weather, while her husband earned a few hundred from selling *roti canai*.

"We could hardly make ends meet

back then and, despite working extra hours, we were rarely able to rake in enough money to buy school uniforms, stationery and books for our two schooling children, aged 13 and 11.

"Alhamdulillah (praise be to God), being selected to participate in the SuriaKU pilot programme is a boon to us.

"To some, RM250 might seem like a small amount, but to my family and I, it helps a lot.

"For the first time, we didn't have to postpone the payment for school fees."

Zarina was one of four SuriaKU participants in Kampung Rambai, who received a visit from an NCIA team led by NCIA senior manager (manufacturing division) Mohd Nazmi Harun.

NCIA chief executive Datuk Redza Rafiq said the programme, to be rolled out nationwide under the 2017 Budget, would be re-branded as My-Suria this year.

The programme aims to boost the socio-economic standing of the participating B40 bracket by selling the electricity generated by the solar en-

ergy sources installed at their houses to Tenaga Nasional Bhd.

Redza said the government's initiative would help the participants to

earn up to RM600 monthly after seven years, and they would continue to receive the secondary income for a total of 21 years under the feed-in tariff (FiT) mechanism under the 2011 Renewable Energy Act.

As for Ariff Bestumi, 51, the news of his family being selected as one of the participants came at the right moment since his vision began deteriorating at the end of 2015.

Now, his wife is helping him sell vegetables at the night and day market.

Grateful for the government's initiative, he said the RM250 aid was not only utilised for his children's school expenses, but also used to cover the vegetable supply cost, which had increased in the past few months, as well as improving the condition of his house.

In line with the 2017 Budget announcement, the programme will be expanded to 1,600 homes across the country with FiT capacity of 6.48 MW and funding of RM81 million.

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NCA senior manager (manufacturing division) Mohd Nazmi Harun (right) with Zarina Mat Amin (second from right) and her family in Arau recently. PIC BY EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN